

Immersive Excess in the Apse of Lascaux

by Joseph Nechvatal

This paper was presented on the 13th of June 2003 at IRCAM Paris as part of a seminar event called *RE/MIX 06* organized by Manuela De Barros and Philippe Codognet.

abstract

This paper will investigate the anonymous collective of skilled artists which created an immersive work of art of a high order in the *Abside* (Apse) of the Grotte de Lascaux . The Apse is a roundish, semi-spherical, penumbra-like chamber (like those adjacent to Romanesque basilicas) approximately 4.5 meters in diameter (about 5 yards) covered on every wall surface (including the ceiling) with thousands of entangled, overlapping, engraved drawings (Leroi-Gourhan, 1968, p. 315) for which, on request, I received a very unique privilege of seeing, though far too briefly.



detail from the wall of the Abside of Lascaux

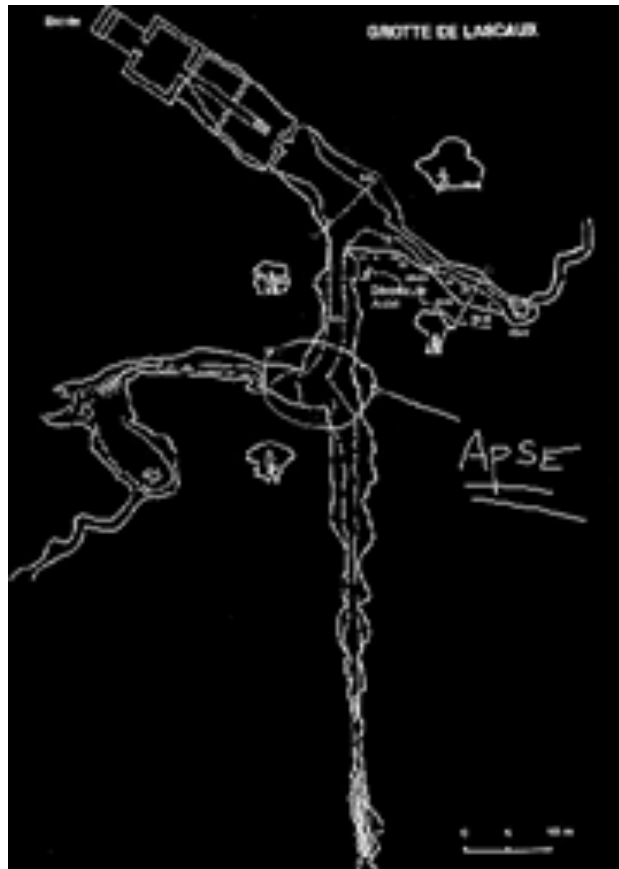


diagram of Lascaux

The ceiling of the Apse of Lascaux (which ranges from 1.6 up to 2.7 meters high (about 5.2 to 8.9 feet) as measured from the original floor height) is so completely and richly bedecked with such engravings that it indicates that the prehistoric people who executed them first constructed a scaffold to do so. (Ruspoli, pp. 146-147) This indicates to me that the Apse was an important and sacred part of the cave and indeed Ruspoli calls it the "strongest, most richly symbolic, most mysterious and most sacred" of all the inner spaces which make up Lascaux. (Ruspoli, p. 146)

Generally the Apse however has been ignored by art theoreticians (and there is only one widely published scholarly investigation of it per se, by Denis Vialou in Arlette Leroi-Gourhan's *Lascaux Inconnu* even though Abbé Glory spent several years trying to decipher this inextricable chamber) as nowhere is the eye permitted to linger over any detail (even though it holds an immense 2.5 meter engraving (8.2 foot) in its midst). Rather, the gaze is urged on by an all-inclusive flood of sublimated optic information in need of visual stamina. Nevertheless, the Apse holds a semi-legible "comprehensive index" of all of the forms of

representation found scattered throughout the entire cave, thus making up what Mario Ruspoli calls Lascaux's "veritable corpus" (real body). (Ruspoli, p. 147) My appraisal, though, is that it is Lascaux's veritable brain and conceptual center.

Of it, Bataille said that it was one of the most remarkable chambers in the cave but that one is ultimately "disappointed" by it. I was not disappointed however. Indeed, what pleased and fascinated me about the Apse was exactly its cryptic and foreboding over-all hyper-totalizing iconographic character granted by its boundless, palimpsestesque, wall-paper-like image explosion (what Bataille called its *fouillis*) of overlapping near non-photo-reproducible stockpiled drawings from which, when sustained visual attention is maintained, unexpected configurations visually emerge. Here animals are superimposed in chaotic discourse, some fully and carefully rendered, others unfulfilled and left open to penetration by the environment, all commingled with an "extraordinary confused jumble" (Leroi-Gourhan, 1968, p. 315) of lines including, remarkably, the sole claviform sign in the Périgord and, even more remarkably, Lascaux's only reindeer, an animal which existed in plenitude during the period of the adornment of Lascaux. Its extensive use of superimposed multiple-operative optic perception (*optic perception* unifies objects in a spatial continuum) presents the viewer with no single point of reference, no orientation, no top, no bottom, no left, no right, and no separate parts to its whole. Such visual-thought is *homospacial* thought then, as according to Rothenberg in *The Emerging Goddess*, homospacial thought is visual-thought "outside of space or spatiality" which "transcends differentiation". (Rothenberg, p. 342) This homospacial quality itself is deeply suggestive of the non-spatial character of consciousness itself, as indicated by both Clarke (Clarke, p. 231) and McGinn. (McGinn, p. 220)

As a result of this homospaciality of the Apse, I had the peculiar feeling of being flooded over by a cloud-like image cesspool of deep meanings which I could not uncode, as if I was in the midst of a model of the Bohm/Pribram universe as implicate pattern. As such it seemed an imposition onto Paleolithic culture of the very thing that should unstable it: nihilism. Nihilism in that it is no longer a matter of heterogeneous figuration, but of scanning a homospacial crisscrossing and oscillating battle scene between interwoven figures, immersed in their ideational ground with which they have merged in a deliberate process of constitutional disfiguration. There is no longer any space outside of the figures to define them, and hence, in a mental reversal, space is immersed in the overlapping figures. The nihilistic cancellation at work here then seemed to be an attempt to deny the validity of subject/object understanding and to deny that any visual erudition of anything whatsoever is possible, in the interests of omnijjective introspection.

Bataille said that what was curious about the Apse was that the artists "abandoned their oeuvre to the next to come after them in an ant-like activity", yet "they did not engrave their figures with less conviction or care". Obviously the artists here did not work from a life model but from the overlapping introspective depths of their visual memories. Indeed likewise, the Apse seems to call upon the viewer to construct a mnemonic psychological interpretation of it based on its tightly woven, intricate abundance, i.e., its latent

excess. But even after introspectively synthesizing the overlapping imploded individual parts into a mnemonic coherent whole, the Apse retained for me a provocative discord and irritation which tantalized my mind farther towards a withheld (perhaps forgotten) seemingly encoded signification. But as our subconscious is energized by sustained desire that which I sensed to be both obscure and overabundant about the Apse merged into a hybrid interpretation which combined conflicting ideas about abundance and nihilism into an *égréore* complex chunk of omnijective information which I then viewed as a *single meta-nihilistic mega-symbol*.

With this meta-nihilistic mega-symbol's boundlessness, the Apse appeared to me as the most sacred of the cave's sacred places. Certainly easy conceptions of one beautiful being as distinguished from another (in specificity) are denied and an aberrant invalidation takes place where previous concepts of the finite and the infinite implode (as do concepts of the voluminous and the vacuous) into a unified field of multiple-reproductive disembodied existences.

This then is a sacred/sexual place of personal intrascoping and transformation (by reason of its creative virtuality and anticipated self-cancellation) as its beautiful representational anti-depictions are neither here nor there but overlap. Clearly what I am saying about the Apse runs counter to the heart of positivism, a paradigm under which we continue to toil unconsciously, as the positivist ideal is a search for rational, systematic thought where images can be broken down, explored, understood, and explained. Here in the Apse we seem to have encountered an irrational systematisms that seems to critique reason, a systematic critique that predates (and in some places overlaps) the modern positivist attitude towards sensation. (Mach, 1914) Here we are inside of a homospatial site of overrunning flux and of hybridization; a place for the rejection of realism and its values (or at least a place to save oneself from the futile and finally unreasonable claims of dogmatic realism and rationalism). The Apse then represents a thrusting off of optic and mental boundaries and thus is a complex mirroring of our own fleeting impressions which constitute the movement of our consciousness; the perpetual weaving and unweaving of ourselves. Here we are not static, and we have no use for reductive concepts or practices, but we are inside a dialectical space that carries its own nihilistic opposite within itself.

Particularly dense with overlapping imagery is the part of the Apse called the *Absidiolo*, a small, niche-like hollow (like the semi-spherical small niches which house holy relics attached to the apse in Romanesque basilicas) just in front of the drop into the Pit. Here the immersant can ostensibly participate in a play of self-tutorial multiple-immersions as one stands in the Absidiolo inside of the Apse which is located inside the groin of the cave itself and introspectively view through sublimated excess an explication of the curved inner-logic of immersion itself: *encased and withheld excess*. Assuredly vision here is no longer the controlling power over animals in nature, but on the contrary, vision itself is engulfed in nature's womb. The motivational force which quickens the Apse then seems to be a desire to undermine perpetual vision and replace it with another type of impregnable (holonogic/immersive) vision, or at least to suggest that there

may be other types of vision possible. Its nihilistic excess serves the positive function of questioning the validity of the customary appearance of things and to make connective understanding inextricably felt.

Indeed the basic function of the visual turbulence of the Apse, from the connective perspective, is to precisely shake our conviction that our visual thinking is sound and to hold any such assured convictions, rather, in suspension. Hence it is only routine that formal issues (where consciousness may be said to be self-referential and self-sufficient) would arise over any humanist narrative ethic, as the Apse is more concerned with a recycling of psychological energy than with optically correct (in Virilio's terms) astuteness. Hence, freed from representational obligations, dark chaotic powers of consciousness are unleashed via the Apse's repressed excessive exuberance.

When interpreting my immersion in the Apse we must remember that even the simplest perceptual activity of viewing discrete images utilizes higher-level cognitive activity, as perceiving anything involves description and inference. Indeed perception utilizes a plethora of built-in assumptions and hypotheses as it fills in absent information and draws conclusions based on (but not reducible to) incoming data in terms of part/whole regions and figure/ground relations from which there eventually emerges a preferred percept. Keeping in mind that the human's natural FOV is roughly 120° vertical by 180° horizontal and that the Apse's perceptual-field far exceeds these parameters, the resulting *flooding-over effect* of the Apse (which is significant in creating the immersive effect) accounts for some of the visual chicanery experienced here. However, in the Apse the level of evasive mono-complexity (given the uniform shading in which the one somber value dominates the complex visual arena) of the fouillis also challenges preconceptions of legibility based on our ability to identify and locate figures in their ground, and this made me wonder if the visualization chamber I was in was not perhaps a training spot for the hunters to improve their discerning vision, so as to aid them in visually discovering animals from within their tangled natural camouflage. But also on scanning the systematic, intricate and perplexing inert spread of the Apse, one cannot but sense that in some way one is looking at a representation of the metaphysics of orgasm and death, and that by absorbing its visual code one was looking sex/death in the face. To be, or not to be: that is the paradigmatic choice when visualizing form into and out of existence when examining the elusive alternatives made manifest here. Being, beings, or nothingness: all are tentative conditions of resolution (or forestalled resolution) here; all spout their own ontological/neurological preferences.

In this purging atmosphere of imploded meta-nihilistic sacrilege, spontaneous reflexes only go so far and reflection necessarily takes over in search of an expansive meaning. Yes, nihilistic amanuensis and jubilant Baudrillard catastrophic implosion are here, not only in how this staggering image-dump can be read, but also in terms of how its creation entailed the task of disrespecting the care with which marks achieve representational artistry in an apparent desire to achieve and contemplate radical negation. This scouring of assertive vision must have been deemed necessary only precisely here, as in the other galleries, very often, superimposed images respected the marks previous laid down and sensitively incorporated them into the

ensuing hybrid super-imposition compositions. By ransacking representational vision so, the Apse paradoxically partakes in the category typical of major art (regardless of its marginal standing within the cave and within Prehistory) as it seemingly rejects the figurative tradition in order to reinvent it as entrancing meta-(or supra)-representation. Thus it is major in the way that John Cage's musical composition/non-composition 4'33" is in forcing us to astutely consider silence as sound. And as such it is a meditation on fullness and emptiness: on the emptiness of fullness and the fullness of emptiness. And this is its key immersive exemplary value.

On further reflection I found the Apse encounter to be in rapport with the philosophy of Hegel where he maintains that *our absolute sense is first a pure being identical with non-being*. (Hegel, 1949)

Archaeologists are continuously undertaking to understand the marks left here from this inaccessible epoch as they analyze its disheveled iconography in hopes of ascertaining why this tangled impulse was consummated. Most do not see however that the Apse defies the common assumption that visual art is associative, that it is based on the human mental capability to make one thing stand for and symbolize another, in agreement with society. The usual assumption is that art-marks on a surface denote content, not just to the mark-maker but to others as well. As example, the Abbé Henri Breuil (1877-1961) (speaking generally about Lascaux) maintained some of the mystifying, abstract, geometric marks represented the hunting paraphernalia of traps, snares and weapons (Breuil) and Leroi-Gourhan placed these abstract marks into a category based upon sexual duality where dots and strokes represented male signs, and ovals, triangles and quadrangles, female. (Leroi-Gourhan, 1968) There is mixed agreement on these two interpretations, but all we know for sure about the abstract constitution of the Apse is that its dynamic cluster of representational/anti-representational operations (and the meta-nihilistic/mega-symbol boundlessness which it contains in its kitty) were reworked over the span of many centuries. However by no means do all of the superimposed figures date from different times, thus their overlapping is not a simplistic function of time nor is it for lack of space. Thus its abstract intentionality assumes a certain degree of lucidity.

The Abbé Glory, who lived in the Lascaux cave for several years while making an inventory of its contents, discovered that in the Apse there are several *re-engraved figures* (Leroi-Gourhan, 1968, p. 316) which is again baffling as it cuts against theories of anti-social resistance to figural thought and places us in the functional realm of *cognitive dissonance*, the psychological term denoting the mental state in which two or more incompatible or contradictory ideas are held to be equally sustainable. (Festinger) Hence the Apse's cognitive dissonance served a virtual function if we remember Brian Massumi's definition of the virtual as "a lived paradox where what are normally opposites coexist, coalesce, and connect...". (Massumi, 1995, p. 91)

If the Apse functioned as a mnemonic devise, or as a site of hegemonious non-being severed from any practical purpose, we shall never know. But it is my hypothesis that the Apse chamber functioned as a cognitive dissonance visualization field and defocus virtualizing area which adjusted-up the expanding and dilating eye/mind to the awareness of conflicting, non-rational omnijective realities involving sex and death through the use of deeply creative virtual visualizations.

We know that most of our cognitive functions and perceptual processes are carried out by the neocortex (the largest part of the human brain) and that the primary visual cortex is the part of the neocortex that receives visual input from the retina. What we can conjecture is that the subterranean aesthetic visualization process at work in the Apse may have been used to feedback optic stimulus to the neocortex in a foreseeing enterprise, an attempt to look into the future, as this process of feed-backing impartial stimulus to the neocortex is roughly the basis for magical gazing. (Eliade, 1964) It is imaginable that such a foreseeing enterprise would also be deemed of help in prognosticating the existence and movements of prospective herds of game which would facilitate the success of the hunt, among other things.

To represent the process of this state of looping neocortex stimulus and to fasten a cluster of spirit-images on a wall (immersed and hidden among a plethora of others) is in some sense to snare and overpower the image and, ultimately, to have Hegelian power over it (i.e., Hegel's notion of the absolute consisted in *becoming other in spirit*). (Hegel, 1949) It is curious however to note that in the few depictions within Lascaux where animals have been wounded by spears or have fallen, they do not appear to be in pain. Perhaps what the seers did here was a way of passing into a virtual world beyond the wall by penetrating through the crowded palimpsest-like clutter and joining with the animal's vital spirits.

David Lewis-Williams and Thomas Dowson make a case that after coming out of a trance, enchanters artistically recreated their visions, both as memory aids for later ritual travels and as portals through which they pass into the spirit world. They view cave markings as powerful ritualistic processes, not just as static pictures, and they maintain that the abstract patterns that occur in parallel with the animals found in such prehistoric caves as Lascaux are representations of the phosphenes that accompany meditative and trance states which accompany seer's practices, particularly those associated with psychoactive plants. (Lewis-Williams & Dowson, 1988) These enchanting practices entailed, it is surmised, trance states which were in some instances produced (in part) by natural chemicals when ingested by an enchanter in order to induce a trance for revelatory purposes. Altered states of consciousness induced by hyperventilation, rhythmic movements or psychoactive drugs universally produce *entropic* visual image-fields (phenomenon derived from the basic structure of the human optic system (anywhere from the eyeball to the visual cortex of the brain) *within vision*). In his book *Alchemy of Culture*, Richard Rudgley gathered supporting evidence (based on the detailed knowledge of local flora and fungi) from several researchers, that Paleolithic cultures utilized the natural distributions of psychoactive species in their locale as an early feature of their cultural development. *Cannabis sativa* was a known intoxicant in prehistoric Europe and hemp seeds have been found

at a variety of Neolithic sites. (Rudgley, p. 28) Trance states too were created and augmented by the utilization of hyperventilation and almost always in the context of rhythmic repetitive singing, drumming, dancing and clapping. According to Lewis-Williams/Dowson's adapted three-stage neuropsychological model, people who hallucinate in the later stages often experience a sensation of a vortex or rotating tunnel around them (vortex or tunnel shapes often appear as individuals enter the deepest stage of a trance fostering a sensation of travelling through a passageway). At that point subjects come to inhabit (rather than merely witness) an hallucinatory immersive world.

One may speculate that the Apse served (and/or reflected) such a surrounding process where the self is experienced as capacity rather than existential identity, and where the evaluation of self has been revised from bound to boundless. Such consciousness represents a paradigm shift which relativizes other recognitions of self-consciousness. It is pertinent that in *A Thousand Plateaus* Deleuze and Guattari describe this shift towards boundlessness as one's becoming a *body without organs* (BwO) in terms of our self-shifting representational planes emerging out of our field of compositional consistency, for the BwO (according to them) is an *insubstantial state of connected being beyond representation which concerns pure becoming and nomadic essences*. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 510) Deleuze and Guattari go on to say that the BwO "causes intensities to pass; it produces and distributes them in a *spatium* that is itself intensive, lacking extension. It is not space nor is it in space; it is matter that occupies space to a given degree - to the degree corresponding to the intensities produced". (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 153) According to Brian Massumi, the aforementioned translator of *A Thousand Plateaus*, the BwO is "an endless weaving together of singular states, each of which is an integration of one or more impulses". These impulses form the body's various "erogenous zone(s)" of condensed "vibratory regions"; zones of intensity in suspended animation. Hence the BwO is "the body outside any determinate state, poised for any action in its repertory; this is the body in terms of its potential, or virtuality". (Massumi, 1992, p. 70)

The above scenarios suggest a merging of awareness into first a more restricted, and then an expanded, intense statement, which is the principle of entering a virtual world. This fact, and it is a fact in terms of VR, surprisingly corresponds to Paul Virilio's central pessimistic message concerning technology: that *nothing is acquired without loss*. (Virilio, 1991) Thus it is possible to say that such states of manifestation are distinguished according to the degree to which potentiality is energized through restriction, similar to the construction of a *metaball*, which in VR is an *equipotential surface created around a particular* made possible after specifying a tacit point and assigning it a radius and intensity for the metaball to adapt. When approached in the virtual world, metaballs blend their surface shapes to form a smooth equipotential surface. To apply the metaball model to consciousness would suggest that a possible criterion for making qualitative distinctions is the degree to which the potential states of consciousness are unfolded and experienced as a smooth totality.

Support for Lewis-Williams/Dowson's visualization account has come from the influential archaeologist Jean Clottes, scientific adviser for prehistoric art at the French Ministère de la Culture. Clottes has joined Lewis-Williams and Dowson in an investigation of their neuropsychological model in an attempt to fill a need for testable theories of why people inconvenienced themselves to such an extent as to create these intensive, highly seductive, immersive spaces. I have taken interest in their work as from it we might extract possible immersive intentions and gesamtkunstwerk principles from the prehistoric etched inner space.

The neuropsychological literature teaches us that trance states proceed in their deepening in stages. Shimmering, incandescent, shifting patterns (referred to in the neuropsychological literature as *entropic phenomena*) have been shown to be produced early on in the trance process when syncretistic vision takes on an all-over field-like quality. Resulting entoptic form-fields contain grids and lattice designs, dots and flecks, zigzags, curves, and filigrees or thin meandering lines (all apparent in the Apse). In deeper trance states, these fields, depending on the state of mind and cultural penchant of the enchanter, are often, according to Lewis-Williams & Dowson, experienced as a rotating vortex or tunnel that seems as if it was completely sealing off and surrounding the subject in an immersive subjective world. The objective external world is progressively excluded from vision and consideration and this field of inner enclosure grows ever more florid. (Lewis-Williams & Dowson, 1988)

These researchers now hypothesize that the art adorning caves, stone shelters and tombs, delineate trance induced immersions stimulated by congesting particular natural molecular arrangements which produce psychoactive effects in the human brain; molecular arrangements which have had a significant cultural history of religious use in inducing visionary, mystical trance states. Accounts of hunter-gatherer and foraging groups include descriptions of enchanters who occasionally conduct rituals that they believe allow them to travel to parallel worlds set out in local belief systems. In these realms, deceased ancestors, deities, and miscellaneous delicate creatures await the enchanter, who deals with them in ways intended to meet indispensable communal needs. (Leroi-Gourhan, 1964) In preparation for their mysterious interchanges, enchanters typically took steps to instigate trances through isolation in dark places, by frenzied dancing, through rapid breathing, and/or through the ingestion of hallucinogenic plants. (Boas)

The validity of exploring theories of altered states of consciousness depends on our capacity to overcome that quixotism which enthralls the mind and takes it no further. That in turn depends on the understanding that the subject experiencing an altered state of consciousness remains in principle the same; the consciousness is essentially that of the same person, and the content of consciousness, the ideas and dreams, are those of the same person also, albeit revealed at a heightened level of intensity by the removal of inhibiting agencies and habits of mind. It is on this basis that Walter Benjamin demanded that the revelations of ecstatic visions be made subject to the same criteria of knowledge as those of the sober state, just as *the conventions of conformist ideology must be treated to the same skepticism as one applies to raptures and dreams*. (Benjamin, 1978)

If one accepts most of what I have said thus far as concerning the alteration of consciousness in the Apse, we may now surmise that this altered consciousness (further altered by the meta-nihilistic chaos of repressed excess) within the Apse would have at least two aspects to it. First, similar to the consciousness shift sometimes experienced when engaging in sex, it is an unleashing liberation and a breaking free from the world's ordinary representational space. This immersive domain is one where one not only transcends narrow conceptual territories, but where one also frees oneself from all the desires of security which limit the familiar experience of everyday life. But it is also an enraptured experience which brings BwO fusion-vision into a larger abstract reality, i.e., life's covert implicate order where boundaries which make up various territories are transcended by our relation to the desire for totality.

In seeking to understand early immersive aesthetic impulses then, I came away from Lascaux's Apse with an incisive trust in its conjectural goal of serving as a vehicle for BwO *inter-special disembodied connectedness*. Supporting such a theory on my part is the so-called sorcerer panel in the cave of Trois Frères, also in the French Pyrenees. Deep underground in a cramped cavern (like the Apse) a rendered half-human/half-animal figure dominates the space. The human/animal figure is staring directly out of the wall (which is unusual for Upper Paleolithic cave art). Just underneath are several heavily engraved panels, a commotion of animal figures with no apparent order or pattern (as again in the Apse). In the midst of this chaos of muddled excess is another human/animal figure and directly in front of this image is a reindeer's hind-legs and rear-end with its female sex prominently displayed. The sacred/sexual immersive (trans-special) potency is palpable.

This proposed explanation for the dark excess of the Apse cannot be proven, nor, I think, disproven and thus it remains a moot point, however fascinating. Though obviously imbued with meaning, we unfortunately are unlikely ever to know the true meaning or function of the image-space of the Apse (or the other marks of the Magdalenian people for that matter). What I know though, with certainty, is how the immersive amplitude of the Apse operated on me in the year 1997, and what it did was to collapse the inherited meaning of human image making into a more inclusive and available sense of excessive ebullition and into a dynamic feeling of wanton sexual climax. The shrouded scatter stirred my desire to seemingly unfold and deliver forth a sanctioned libidinous pathos where forms of salacious creative ferment and levels of self-indulgence are concurrent. From this state of floridity it might be possible to further define immersive states of consciousness as those which *contain a condition in which reality is perceived as consisting of more than that which everyday vision brings to light*. Such immersive states bypass discursive counterintuitive processes and confer a greater scope to holocentric vision and therefore an enhanced and expanded unanimity with ideals of totality.

Bolstering this contention is the fact that before leaving the Apse I had looked around down the Passageway and into a portion of the Salle des Taureaux and I recall these chambers taking on the character of a moist

orifice. At that point I felt like a BwO ravisher about to act out some unfathomable, risqué, multi-genus sexual act, as if I was emancipated to ford my human anthropocentric sexual frontiers and burst out of my specific species identity and into that of a bull, horse, peacock or peccadillo; just as I have frequently imagined myself doing when engaged in sexual union. It is this sense of inhabiting a new corporeality in obbligo that is entirely unnatural, preposterous, and variegated which, as we shall see, holds importance when uncovering the idealized desires and onastic qualities of the immersive art experience.

What additionally fascinates is that this fine jumble of delicate lines, some beautifully representational and others again not, corresponded to the prolonged series of greyish drawing with which I began my career as an artist some twenty years ago: drawings which had partially been conceived of as a shadow of our nervous system's meshed neural signals.



Joseph Nechvatal, *Uplifting* (1983) 11 x 14" graphite on paper drawing
collection of Frederick R. Weisman Art Museum, University of Minnesota

Thus the Apse seemed as an idealized shred from my own memory and I nearly felt that from the ceiling angelic divinities would pelt garlands of roses down on me. We should note however that it is common to find prehistoric stones of various sizes that were incised with a jumble of overlapping animal drawings in no apparent order, piled on-top of one another to the point of illegibility. (Leroi-Gourhan, 1968, p. 33) However we can say with assurance that the Apse's brimful-room style is almost unprecedented, save for

certain panels in Les Trois Frères and at the cave of Combarelles, a nearby Périgord cavern which I subsequently visited.

Joseph Nechvatal
www.nechvatal.net

resources

- Vialou, D. 1979. "Les Gravures du Passage et de l'Abside" In Leroi-Gourhan, Arlette. ed. 1979. *Lascaux Inconnu*. Paris: C.N.R.S.
- Ruspoli, M. 1987. *The Cave of Lascaux: The Final Photographic Record*. New York: Abrams
- Leroi-Gourhan, André. 1964. *Les Religions de la Préhistoire*. Paris: P.U.F.
- Leroi-Gourhan, André. 1968. *The Art of Prehistoric Man in Western Europe*. London: Thames and Hudson
- Leroi-Gourhan, André. 1982. *The Dawn of European Art: An Introduction to Paleolithic Cave Painting*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Leroi-Gourhan, André. 1984. *L'Art Des Cavernes: Atlas Des Grottes Ornées Paléolithiques*. Paris: Ministère de la Culture
- Leroi-Gourhan, Arlette. ed. 1979. *Lascaux Inconnu*. Paris: C.N.R.S.
- Lewis-Williams, J. D. and Dowson, T. 1988. "The Signs of All Times: Entoptic Phenomena in Upper Paleolithic Art" In *Current Anthropology*, No. 29, pp. 201-245
- Huxley, F. 1990. *The Eye: The Seer and the Seen*. New York: Thames and Hudson
- Benjamin, W. 1978. *Reflections*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich
- Boas, F. 1965. *The Mind of Primitive Man*. New York: Free Press
- John Cage: <http://www.emf.net/~mal/cage.html>
- Cage, J. 1966. *Silence*. London: Calder and Boyers
- McGinn, C. 1995. "Consciousness and Space" In *Journal of Consciousness Studies: Controversies in Science and the Humanities*, Vol. 2, No. 3, pp. 220-230
- Rothenberg, A. 1979. *The Emerging Goddess*. Chicago: University of Chicago
- Clarke, C. J. S. 1995. "The Nonlocality of Mind" In *Journal of Consciousness Studies: Controversies in Science and the Humanities*, Vol. 2, No. 3, pp. 231-240
- Bataille, G. 1955. *Lascaux: La Naissance de l'Art*. Geneva: Skira
- Bataille, G. 1978. *Oeuvres Complètes: Lascaux: La Naissance de l'Art*. Paris: Gallimard
- Bataille, G. 1985. *Visions of Excess*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press
- Bataille, G. 1987. *Eroticism*. London: Boyars
- Bataille, G. 1988a. *Inner Experience*. Albany NY: State University of New York
- Bataille, G. 1988b. *Accursed Share*. New York: Zone Books
- Bataille, G. 1988c. *Guilty*. Venice, Ca.: Lapis Press
- Bataille, G. 1989. *The Tears of Eros*. San Francisco: City Lights Books
- Hegel, G. W. F. 1949. *The Phenomenology of Mind*. London: G. Allen
- Breuil, H. 1952. *Four Hundred Centuries of Cave Art*. New York: Hacker
- Virilio, P. 1991. *The Aesthetics of Disappearance*. New York: Semiotext(e)
- Rudgley, R. 1993. *The Alchemy of Culture: Intoxicants in Society*. London: British Museum Press
- Eliade, M. 1959. *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*. New York: Harcourt Brace and Company
- Eliade, M. 1978. *A History of Religious Ideas: From the Stone Age to the Eleusinian Mysteries*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press
- Eliade, M. 1964. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. New York: Pantheon
- Morgan, R. C. 1992. "Le Supra, l'Infra, la Metamorphose" In Nechvatal, J. and Gagneur, D. eds. 1992. *Excess in the Techno-mediocratic Society*. Arbois: Musée d'Arbois.
- Candau, A. ed. 1990. *Joseph Nechvatal: Selected Works*. Paris: Editions Antoine Candau

